

7

SPEECH OF MAJOR GENERAL BASILIO J. VALDES DELIVERED ON THE
OCCASION OF THE AWARD TO HIM OF THE
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE STAR
(BRONZE CLASP WITH A CITATION STAR AND TWO ANAHAW LEAVES)
BY THE SECRETARY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
ON 4 DECEMBER 1945 AT CAMP MURPHY

This is not an oration, it is a heart to heart talk to you my comrades, my officers and men, my friends, who during my incumbency as Chief of Staff have invariably given me your unstinted loyalty and most valuable cooperation. It is a heart to heart talk to USAFFE officers and men who with me suffered untold privations and undescribable hunger during those hectic months of our stubborn but gradual dwindling resistance on Bataan and Corregidor. When the clouds of war began darkening our horizon, by order of the President of the United States through the President of the Philippines, ten Philippine Army divisions were called to the colors. Many of the men that responded had had only the minimum of five and a half months of military training as required by the National Defense Act. Enemies of our organization tried hard to discredit that work performed by that brilliant strategist, General of the Armies MacArthur, in the organization and training of the Philippine Army. Little or no value at all was given to the efforts exerted by recognized military leaders such as General of the Armies Eisenhower and his life long companion Colonel Ord whose untimely death was a severe blow to all of us. These detractors of our National Defense program went as far as to

7

assure that the Philippine Army officers and men could not fight and would run at the first encounter. History and the statements of various American Generals in Bataan and Corregidor have belied these accusations and have proved to the whole world that the Filipino when he fights for a noble cause and for the defense of his home and his beloved ones is second to none in the field of battle. The stories of heroism of officers and men could fill many pages. When the moment to obey the order of reduction of rations came, all of you tightened your belts and kept on fighting. When the order of surrender was given, you obediently submitted yourselves to the consequences of such order. Many of our comrades died of weakness and disease in the horrible "March of Death" and those who survived met death in the prison camps where the Japanese military authorities heartlessly and cruelly saw to it that these men who had suffered and sacrificed so much, received as little as possible of the essential comforts of life.

This is a heart to heart talk to you officers and men of the Guerrilla Forces of the Philippines who through your magnificent resistance against the enemy and your determination to uphold the dignity of the United States of America and of the Commonwealth of the Philippines, demonstrated in a most eloquent way that you are made of the fiber of which every Filipino can be proud of. During three dark and seemingly endless years you kept your faith in America and in our gallant leaders, General of the Armies Douglas MacArthur, our beloved President Quezon

and President Osmena. I visited some of your units and spent several days with you in the field during the fighting. Many of the men were barefooted, had practically no clothes, and existed on meager rations. When told to attack and capture an objective you did so unhesitatingly and with the smile of Victory in your faces no matter what the dangers were.

This is a heart to heart talk to those officers and men who served with me in the old Philippine Constabulary, an organization whose record and exploits will forever remain engraved in the hearts of the Filipino people. You grew old in this semi-military organization, and gave the best years of your lives to the service of our country. I hope that the Government will do you justice and grant you the gratuity or the retirement that you have so conscientiously earned.

To you all again my profound thanks for your valuable assistance in the solution of the many intricate problems affecting the Philippine Army. Credit therefore belongs to you. There have been numerous problems affecting the guerrilla forces that have remained unsolved, not because of lack of interest in their welfare, as some have tried to state, but because the final decision rested in higher headquarters. I want you all to know that even in the darkest days during the last period of my administration I have never wavered in my sincere desire to help you.

Give to General Jalandoni, my successor, my old friend and loyal subordinate, the same support and the same loyalty that you have given to me. He deserves it. He is an officer with a brilliant record behind him. I know that he will always fight for you. He will not fail you.

Give to the Secretary of National Defense your full cooperation so that his administration will be a complete success. I assure you that he has the best interest of the Philippine Army at heart.

Lastly, let me remind you that we owe our loyalty to our Commander-in-Chief, President Sergio Osmena. You well know that the problems of peace and order throughout the country are important and require immediate attention. He expects that the Philippine Army maintain its efficiency in its highest level.

God bless you all.

nmd